

# ASSESSMENT IN MUSIC



In Music education, teachers have long understood that, as Swanwick observed "... to teach is to assess" (Swanwick, 1988 p.149).

## National Curriculum

### Aims

The national curriculum for music aims to ensure that all pupils:

- perform, listen to, review and evaluate music across a range of historical periods, genres, styles and traditions, including the works of the great composers and musicians
- learn to sing and to use their voices, to create and compose music on their own and with others, have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, use technology appropriately and have the opportunity to progress to the next level of musical excellence
- understand and explore how music is created, produced and communicated, including through the interrelated dimensions: pitch, duration, dynamics, tempo, timbre, texture, structure and appropriate musical notations

### Subject Content

#### Key stage 1

Pupils should be taught to:

- use their voices expressively and creatively by singing songs and speaking chants and rhymes
- play tuned and untuned instruments musically
- listen with concentration and understanding to a range of high-quality live and recorded music
- experiment with, create, select and combine sounds using the interrelated dimensions of music

#### Key stage 2

Pupils should be taught to sing and play musically with increasing confidence and control. They should develop an understanding of musical composition, organising and manipulating ideas within musical structures and reproducing sounds from aural memory.

Pupils should be taught to:

- play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts, using their voices and playing musical instruments with increasing accuracy, fluency, control and expression
- improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
- listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory
- use and understand staff and other musical notations
- appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians
- develop an understanding of the history of music

**At St John's we recognise that music is predominantly a skills-based subject and therefore needs to be assessed in a different way to other subjects.**

In their recent [Music Subject Research Review](#), Ofsted (2021) split the subject into declarative (fact-based), procedural (skills-based), and tacit (experiential) knowledge.

The procedural (skills-based) knowledge is the mainstay of the Music curriculum, delivered through tacit and experiential learning. The declarative (fact-based) knowledge is only a very small part of what pupils learn.

**The Music Curriculum comprises of three parts:**

#### Knowledge:

Important subject knowledge relates to:

- Developing a shared understanding of the musical elements, which are: pitch, melody/harmony, structure, rhythm, texture, timbre, dynamics, tempo.
- Developing an increasing understanding of graphic score and notation.
- Understanding the key features of a range of musical forms and styles.

## **Skills**

Important subject skills include:

- **Performing** (including vocal and instrumental)
- **Improvising and composing** (including vocal and instrumental)
- **Listening and appreciation** (including analysing, evaluating, and appreciating a range of musical forms and styles across genres and periods of time).

## **Experiences**

Important learning experiences could include:

- Opportunities to listen to live music performances
- Rehearsing and performing music to an audience
- Exploring a range of instruments
- Working alongside creative professionals, including the local Music Service
- Taking part in competitions e.g. Somerset Schools Choir Competition

## **Assessment in music has 3 main purposes:**

- To be part of the learning process (games, exercises, and low stakes retrieval).
- To give developmental feedback.
- To judge the impact of the curriculum on each child as a whole.

In order to assess pupils' progress, two forms of assessment are used:

### **Formative assessment**

Individualised, immediate feedback for pupils to move on their learning within a lesson. This is ongoing throughout the lessons and unit of work and allows the teacher to pick up any misconceptions or move learning on at a greater pace.

Formative assessment:

- Allows for self-reflection and peer feedback
- Shapes the next steps in learning.

"... every time a teacher helps a child with a glockenspiel beater, guitar fingering, recorder technique, or breathing while singing, that teacher will be undertaking an assessment for learning interaction."

(Curriculum and assessment in music education: The research context p.5)

### **Summative assessment**

Usually, take place at the end of the musical unit. This may be done by videoing the class at the start and end of a unit of learning. Videoing a group or class can provide an assessment opportunity for pupils as well as the teacher.

We use **Sing Up and Somerset Music WCET targets\*** for our Music planning and assessment.

SingUp <https://www.singup.org/music/sing-up-music-curriculum/sing-up-music>

\*WCET Whole Class Ensemble Training <https://somersetmusic.co.uk/music-tuition/wcet/>